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FIVE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE KENSINGTON RUNE STONE

In the discussion concerning the Kensington Rune Stone, the best evidence of its truth or falsity will be found within the inscription itself. In an inscription of such length and date linguistic anachronisms and errors are sure to appear if the inscription is not genuine. If it contains no such faults it may be safely accepted as true. The Achilles-heel of vulnerability will not be missing if the inscription be the work of a literary forger.

In view of this, it is deplorable that the linguistic details have not yet been subjected to a searching public analysis. While many men of reputed ability have commented on the inscription their comments in most cases have been in the form of brief interviews, permitting only bald statements of opinion concerning the merits of certain words, unsupported by intelligent exposition.

As good illustrations of these bald ex cathedra pronouncements may be cited the five most common objections against the inscription—the supposed English words, *from*, *mans*, *of* (*west*), *þeþ* and *illy*. We are told that these are English words, but we have not yet been given any reasons for this conclusion. I have therefore thought that it might not be amiss to give these alleged English words a more detailed consideration.

In order that the reader may see the connections in which these words are used, a transliteration of the inscription together with its translation is given below.

8 göter ok 22 norrmen po opþagelse-
farþ fro vinlanþ of vest vi haþe lægir
veþ 2 skjar en þags rise norr fro þeno
sten vi var ok fiske en þagh æptir vi
kom hem fan 10 man röþe afbloþ og
þeþ A V M frælse af illy har 10 mans
ve havet at se æptir vore skip 14 þagh-
rise from þeno öh ahr 1362

Eight Goths and twenty-two Norse-
men on [an] exploration-journey from
Vinland through the western regions.
We had camp by two skerries one
day's journey north from this stone.
We were [out] and fished one day.
When we came home we found ten
men, red with blood and dead. Ave
Maria! Save us from evil!
[We] have ten of our party by the sea
to look after [or for] our vessels 14 day
journey from this island. Year 1362.

From. This preposition occurs three times in the inscription. Twice it has the normal spelling *fro*, but the third time we have the criticized form *from*. Seeing that the rune master has twice shown that he is familiar with the normal form, it seems strange that in the third instance he should have forgotten his native form and substituted a foreign word. Especially does this apply to prepositions and conjunctions which, because of their lack of definite meaning, are the last words of a language acquired by a foreigner. A German-American, for instance, may be able to speak tolerably good English, but his speech will still be specked with *aber*, *bei*, *mit*, and other German conjunctions and prepositions of his native land.

This *from* in the inscription is not a loan from the English, but is an archaic form of the preposition *fro*, and occurs sporadically from the earliest days of Swedish literature down to the XVI century. Falk and Torp state that the form *fram* in the meaning of *fra* occurs sporadically in old East Scandinavian (that is, the region east of the Christiania fjord).¹ Following are some illustrations of its use.

In Linköping's *Biskopskrönika*, written in 1523, we read:

Rijket kom ater til Swenske men, <i>fram</i> the uthlanske som thet är en. ²	The Kingdom came again to Swedish men from the foreigners as it is now.
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In the second book of the *Maccabees*, translated in 1484, we read:

Han lat genstan upbyggia gymnasium hart undirtornit ey langt <i>fram</i> temp- let. ³	He immediately rebuilt the public school close by the tower and not far from the temple.
--	--

This same meaning of *fram* also occurs in a MS. of the *Revelations of St. Birgitta* of 1430:

Iak drouis af manga handa onytteli- kom thankom huilka iak forma ey bort <i>fram</i> mik skilja. ⁴	I am grieved by many kinds of vain thoughts which I am unable to put away from me.
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¹ *Etymologisk Ordbog*, article *fra*.

² *Svenska Medeltidsdikter*, Klemming's Ed., Stockholm, 1882, p. 502, l. 514; Cf. p. 509.

³ *Svenska Med. Bibelarbeten*, Klemming's Ed., Stockholm, 1853, p. 290, l. 27; Cf. p. 424.

⁴ Klemming's Ed., Stockholm, 1857, p. 363, l. 13; Cf. p. 407.

Thy tha the gaa in j Skola tha gar iak For when they go into the school then
fram them.⁵ I will go from them.

Fram in this sense also occurs in Lydikin's *Anteckningar till Vestgötalagen*, MS. of Ca. 1300⁶ as well as in the Gothic of *Ulfilas*.⁷ Other illustrations of its use are also cited and quite fully discussed by Axel Kock, who shows that this *fram* is a survival of the Gothic *fram* which is the ancestral form of the English *from* and the Swedish *från* as well.⁸

It may be objected that in the above illustrations the word is spelled *fram*, whereas on the stone we have *from*.

The difference is a purely dialectic one and speaks for the authenticity of the inscription. Professor Axel Kock has very fully shown by his exhaustive research that long *a* when joined with a labial consonant during the XIV century had a strong tendency toward *ð* and *o*.⁹ In another place he writes: "Under 1300-talet antog i fornsvenskan det långa *a*-ljudet ett allt mera *ð*-liknande ljud, tills inemot år 1400 öfvergången fullbordats."¹⁰ According to Kock, we see the tendency consummated in most writers by 1400, while in others *a* and *ð* are used interchangeably (as, for instance, *fran* and *från* on the same page).¹¹ The same is affirmed and illustrated by Noreen.¹² As no runic character for *ð* (*aa*) existed in the XIV century, the *o* (≡) being used for both *aa* and *o*, it is probable that the runemaster's *ƿr̥iȳ* was phonetically equivalent to *fraam*. The use of *o* for *aa* was also common in MSS. written in the Latin

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101, l. 5, Cf. p. 404.

⁶ *Västgötalagen*, Schlyter's Ed., Stockholm, 1827, p. 397, article *fram*.

⁷ M. Heyne's Ed., (7th), p. 368.

* *Några Bidrag in Arkiv for Nor. Fil.*, Lund, 1890, pp. 31-34. See also Noreen's *Altschwedische Grammatik*, §248, *Anm.* 2. I am indebted to the eminent lexicographer, K. F. Söderwall, for several of the above references.

⁹ *Svensk Ljudhistoria*, I, pp. 352-354.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

¹¹ Brandt's *Gammeldansk Læsebog*, p. 308, l. 9 *fraan*, l. 19 *fræn*. We have an illustration of the vacillation in expressing this sound in the spelling of Oslo (the old name of Christiania), which is sometimes spelled *Aslo*, sometimes *Oslo*. In letters of 1309, 1312, and 1321 it is spelled *Aslo*, see *Dipl. Nor.*, I, 112; III, 97, and V, 61; while in letters of 1360, 1376, and other letters it is spelled *Oslo*, see *Dipl. Nor.*, IV, 317; III, 307, etc.

¹² *Altschwedische Grammatik*, §110.

alphabet. Kock cites numerous examples from the XIV and XV centuries of words with an *aa* sound which were written with *o*, as *motte* for *mätte*, *forstondit* for *förståndit*, *gorden* for *gården*, *monga* for *många*, etc.¹³

There is another illustration of this word, this time from Norway. Here we find not only the troublesome *m*, but also the *o*. In Aurland parish, Sogn, Norway, there was once upon a time an ancient church, built some time in the XIV century.¹⁴ It was lighted by a series of small ornamented windows, the gifts of various church members. In the center of each of these windows were inscribed the respective donors' names, as for instance,

From
Nils Eirikson
Flumb
Ole Knutson
I bedum¹⁵

The only pertinent criticism to make of the form *from* in the Kensington inscription lies in the questions: Inasmuch as the writer knew the normal form *fro*, why did he also use *from*? Is this not illogical? The answer to this must be: Yes, it is illogical. But it is a sample of that erratic logic which abounds in the writings of the Middle Ages. For instance, in the Malstad inscription of the XII century we twice have *stin* and once *stain*.¹⁶ In this case *stain* is an archaism for *stin* (stone) just as is *from* for *fram*. In a letter of 1341 we find *fra* and *fron* used only two lines apart.¹⁷ In a Guide to Pilgrims written about 1425, we find *fra*, *fraan*, and *fran* used interchangeably.¹⁸

Mans. This word has probably been subject to more criticism than any other. Gjessing, Breda, Hægstad, Dahlerup, Dieserud and others have assumed it to be an English word,

¹³ *Svensk Ljudhistoria*, I, pp. 400, 401.

¹⁴ L. Dietrichson, *De Norske Stavekirker*, Christiania, 1892, p. 474.

¹⁵ See P. L. Flom's reminiscences in *Skandinaven*, March, 1899, and A. B. Melhouse in *Skandinaven*, January, 1911.

¹⁶ *Run-urkunder* af J. G. Liljegren, Stockholm, 1833, No. 1065.

¹⁷ Hildebrand's *Svensk Dipl.*, V, part I, p. 10.

¹⁸ *Gammeldansk Læsebog*, p. 307, ll. 7 and 25; p. 308, ll. 9 and 19; and p. 310, ll. 13 and 23.

the rune master having supposedly added the usual *s* to make the plural. Evidently it has not occurred to these critics that such a plural form as *mans* does not exist in English. Flom assumes that the *s* is merely an error in writing. It has been a puzzle to all.

If the spelling *mans* represents the rune master's conception of the proper plural form of *man*, why did he not use this in his earlier use of the same word? This substantive occurs twice, both times in the accusative case and both times preceded by the numeral 10. The first time it is spelled properly enough *man* (*vi fan 10 man*). Why, then, is the *s* added in his second use of the word?

This change in spelling is far from meaningless, and lies far deeper than an ignorant display of impossible English.

The substantive *man* had two meanings in the Old Norse (and Old Swedish). The first meaning refers to man as an individual. This is the meaning of the first *man* in the inscription. When the word *man* was preceded by a numeral it sometimes was used in the genitive case, as for instance,

Konunga feck Hareki XXX manna,¹⁹ The King provided Harik with 30
men,

but more often in the accusative case ("XII mann"²⁰). In the inscription it is given in the accusative.

The second meaning of *man* may be approximately translated as *people, household, party*. A more precise rendering is given by the modern Norse word *folk* or *mandskab*.²¹ In this meaning the word was used only in the singular number, and when dependent upon a numeral or any other word expressing quantity, almost always has the genitive form. This is the sense in which *mans* (genitive) is used in the inscription, and the clause may be loosely translated as "we have ten of our

¹⁹ Snorre Sturlason's *Heimskringla*, Stockholm, 1816, I, 288.

²⁰ *Flateyrbók*, I, (Christiania, 1860) 267, l. 19.

²¹ See Fritzner's *Ordbog*, Christiania, 1886, article *man*. Fritzner gives the following definitions: "Man— (1) ens Husfolk uden Forskjel saa at under denne Benævneelse indbefattedes baade Børn og Træle som ogsaa andre Tjenere. (2) Træle saavel mandlig som kvindelig ogsaa i kollektiv Betydning."

party to look after our vessels." The following are illustrations of this collective use of *mans*:

Til Olafs Konungs kom her *mans*, hal-
tir oc blinder, edr a annen vegsiuker.²²
Epter thesso aurbodi liop upp mugi
manns, oc sotti til Medalhusa.²³
Olaf Konungr war tha j nidarosi ok
hafdi med ser fjolda *mannz*.²⁴

To King Olaf came an army of people,
lame and blind, or otherwise sick.
After these tidings ran up a crowd of
people, and hurried to Medalhus.
King Olaf was then in Nidaros and
had with him a multitude of people.

This collective genitive is still in use in Modern Icelandic. The following illustrations are taken from an article describing the emigration from Iceland to America, printed in an Icelandic almanac:

Thath voru nalgit 250 *manns* som kom
med gufuskibet St. Patrick.²⁵
Aredh 1873, voru samankomnir a
Akureyri hatt a annadh hundradh
manns.²⁶

Almost 250 persons came with St.
Patrick.
In 1873, were gathered together at
Akureyri almost two hundred people.

When coupled with such a collective noun or numeral, the word *man* almost always, as has been said, took the genitive form *mans*. Inasmuch as it was almost always thus coupled, it appears that the genitive form by reason of its frequent use was also sometimes felt as an irregular form of the nominative and the accusative. There are a number of cases where *mans* is thus used in the nominative or the accusative. A Swedish letter of 1349, for instance, reads:

Han ok hans æruinge skal that goz
ænnær like aghæ mæth swa skiæl at
theer guier mik ater swa mangæ
pæningæ som twer gather *mæns* af
hans wæghnæ og twer af minæ sighiæ,
etc.²⁷

He and his heirs shall have the pro-
perty with the understanding that
they give me back so much money as
two good men on his part and two
on mine shall determine, etc.

²² *Heimskringla*, II, 433, line 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, I, 257, line 21. See also II, p. 301, line 10; p. 5, line 22; p. 6, line 18; p. 334, line 11, and p. 390, line 24.

²⁴ *Flateyjarbók*, I, 310, line 21. See also p. 454, line 3, and p. 61, line 25.

²⁵ *Almanak*, 1899, edited and published by Olafur Thorgeirsson, Winnipeg, Page 25. See also p. 27.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1900, p. 40.

²⁷ *Svensk Dipl.*, 1st Samling, No. 4503.

The Law of Frostathing has this passage:

Ef þræll <i>manns</i> rekr til lausnar at leysa sik, etc. ²⁸	If thrall folk [trællefolk, slaves] endeavor to free themselves, etc.
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(Noreen incidentally mentions other words, as *spæns* and *marks*, whose singular genitive forms have been adopted for plural nominative and accusative use.²⁹ The list might be considerably increased.)

The above illustrations are sufficient to show that *mans* is not an English plural form or some error by the rune master, but is an ancient Norse and Swedish collective frequently used by many writers in the function of both the nominative and the accusative case. It is immaterial to discuss what grammatical case the rune master had in mind when he wrote the form *mans*. The important thing is that he had a different conception in mind when he wrote: "We found ten men red with blood and dead," than when he said: "We have ten men by the sea." In the first instance he thinks of the ten dead men as ten individual companions now gone forever, and therefore uses the plural form *men*. In the second case he thinks of the ten men by the sea as a subdivision of the party as a whole, and therefore uses the collective singular form *mans*. This is a nice point in the linguistic usage of the time, not discussed in any text-book, and speaks strongly for the authenticity of the inscription.

Of. The phrase *fro Vinland of west* has been translated by some: *from Vinland of the West*. Inasmuch as we have no Vinland of the East, this translation is absurd. Moreover, to assume that *of west* is an anglicism is to betray ignorance of one of the most interesting words in the Old Scandinavian speech.

The sense of this word *of* is somewhat obscure, because of its wide range of rather elusive meanings, some of which lexicographers have been unable to classify. Passing by several usages which are here inapplicable, it may be said that the particle *of* is most frequently used as a preposition. As such Fritzner

²⁸ Fritzner's *Ordbog*, III, p. 73, under article *rekr.*

²⁹ *Altschwedische Grammatik*, §431, Anm. 5.

finds that it is used in seven different ways. His first and principal definition as a preposition is the following: "*of* (1) *over*, where there is reference to movement over something which is meanwhile traversed" ("*of*, (1) *over*, hvor der er tale om en bevægelse henover noget, som derunder passerer").³⁰ He gives (*ibid.*) the following illustrative passages:

Er han for sudr <i>of</i> fjall.	As he journeyed south over the mountains.
Far M. annan dag <i>of</i> akr einns audigs manns.	Another day M. passed through the field of a wealthy man.
Þá er han for <i>of</i> biskopssyslu sina.	Then as he travelled through his diocese.

This definition no doubt expresses the meaning of the word in the inscription. As *vest* means "the western regions" (*den vestlige himmelegh*),³¹ the most correct rendering is therefore, "on a journey of exploration through the western regions" ("paa en opdagelsesreise udover vesten").

In *Ynglingatal* is an old stanza wherein *of* is used in an exactly similar manner. *Of austr* here occurs in the meaning *over or through the eastern regions*:

Sa er <i>of</i> austr adhan hafdhi bruna borg of borin lengi. ³²	He who through the eastern regions had recently and long carried his head [<i>bruna borg</i> = the cliff of his eye-brows; i.e., his head].
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Professor Jónsson (*ibid.*) translates it: "Den som omkring eller i de østlige egne længe havde baaret sit hoved."

Storm more freely renders it: "Den som öster ofte og længe hovedet höit havde baaret."³³

Of also occurs coupled with nouns of like import in several later MSS. In the Arne Magnean collection of MSS. under number 764 are found several geographic statements supposed to date from the latter half of the thirteenth century. In one of these we read: "Fra Bjarmaland ganga lond til obygdá *of*

³⁰ Fritzner's *Ordbog*, II, p. 867.

³¹ *Ibid.*, article *vestr*, p. 866. See also under *af*.

³² Finnur Jónsson's *Kongesagaerne*, p. 32.

³³ G. Storm's, *Kongesagaer*, p. 28.

nordhrætt, allt till thess er Grænland tekr vidh.”³⁴ “From Bjarmaland goes [i.e., extends] land to the unsettled regions, over [or through] the northern regions until Greenland begins.” Another geographic description of the fourteenth century also has *of nordrætt*.³⁵

Professor Fossum gives several other illustrations of *of* used in the meaning of *over* or *through*, such as *of engi mans*—through a man’s field; *of allan Noreg*—over all Norway, etc.³⁶

The above illustrations are sufficient to show that there is nothing objectionable in this word.

þep. The Old Norse form of this word was *daudr* which in Swedish became *död*, as is well known to all philologists. The peculiar spelling of this word has therefore been much criticized and superficial critics have assumed that the runic scribe had meant to write the English word *dead*.³⁷

It is quite true that immigrants to America quickly adopt certain words into their native speech, particularly nouns and verbs, which are phonetically easier than their native equivalents. Among such loans, however, is not *dead*. Although I have specialized in Norwegian-American history for twenty years in preparation for my history of Norwegian Immigration and have visited almost all Norwegian settlements in America, I cannot recall that I have ever heard the word *dead* used in Norwegian speech. If by any chance an immigrant had become so anglicised as to unconsciously use *dead* when writing his native tongue he would, no doubt, also have used the English spelling instead of such a strange spelling as *þep*.

The correct explanation of this strange spelling lies far from any theory of “pigeon English,” and is to be found in the apparent difficulty the untrained writers of the Middle Ages sometimes had in differentiating between the sounds of the letters *e* and *ö* (whether long or short vowel) as then spoken.

³⁴ *Grønlands Historiske Mindesmærker*, Copenhagen, 1845, III, p. 216.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220, line 5.

³⁶ “The Study of Language on Kensington Runestone leads to Satisfactory Results,” in *The Norwegian-American*, Northfield, Minn., Feb. 24, 1911.

³⁷ Gjessing in *Symra*, 1909, p. 121; Dieserud in *Skandinaven*, May 4, 1910; Breda in *Symra* (Decorah, Ia.), VI, p. 78.

Schlyter says that Lydikin, a commentator of *Vestgötalagen*, writing about 1325, frequently writes *e* for *ö* and vice versa.³⁸

This interchange of *e* and *ö* is frequently met with in the *Flateyrbók* (MS. of ca. 1389), sometimes only a few lines apart. In line 19 of column 223 we read: "Sidan sigla þeir *tuo dögr*;" in line 33, same column, we find: "Sigldy (þeir) nu fiogur *degr*."³⁹ On another page we find: "Bjarne uar sinn uetr huort utan landz edr med *fedr* sinum." A little further on we read: "Han ætlade at hallda sidueniu sinne ok þiggia at *födr* sinum uetr vist."⁴⁰

Axel Kock has given many illustrations showing the use of *e* for *ö* and vice versa. He shows that *messa*, Eng. *mass* (a religious service) is written both *messa* and *mössa*; *sövn* (sleep) is spelled both *svēfn* and *svöfn*; *peper* (pepper) is frequently spelled *pöper*, etc.⁴¹ In the second volume of his monumental history of Swedish sound development, he goes into the subject of the substitution of *e* for *ö* more fully. He cites *grēa* for *gröa* (grain crops), *brēdr* for *brödr* (brothers), *hēra* for *höra* (to hear), *lēna* for *löna* (to hide), *brēddirne* for *bröderne* (the brothers), *berdha* for *bördha*, *snepa* for *snöpa*, *grēpa* for *gröpa*, *fetr* for *föter*, *brēt* for *bröt* and many more.⁴² Noreen in his *Altschwedische Grammatik* also notices and comments on the frequent interchange of *e* and *ö*.⁴³

Reeves has pointed out that the "third secretary" of the *Hauksbók* (MS. of about 1320), for the most part, writes *e* for *ö*.⁴⁴ Similarly also, the writer of *Eriks Saga Rauða* (A. M. 557) who has *einfeþing* five times on one page instead of *einfeöting*.⁴⁵

Further illustrations of the frequent interchange of *e* and *ö* are found in *öptir* for *eptir*,⁴⁶ *Jenköping* for *Jönköping*,⁴⁷

³⁸ *Vestgötalagen*, Collin and Schlyter's Ed., pp. VIII and IX.

³⁹ See Reeves, *The Finding of Wineland the Good*. Original text in photostatic copy opposite pp. 143 and 144.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15, line 50, and p. 21, line 6.

⁴¹ *Svensk Ljudhistoria*, I, p. 127.

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, pp. 38-42. See particularly, §623.

⁴³ §§136 and 146, 3.

⁴⁴ *The Finding of Wineland the Good*, p. 101.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, see photostatic copy opposite p. 137.

⁴⁶ Brate and Bugge's *Runverser*, p. 224. Also several times in later Swedish writings; see Noreen's *Altschw. Gram.* under *öptir*.

⁴⁷ *O. Petri Kröni.*, 77, 8; 217, 15; *P. Brahe Kröni*, 35, 17; 35, 21; *Svart Kröni.*, 143, 8; 143, 10.

fornömdhæ for *fornæmpder*,⁴⁸ *begöra* for *begæra*,⁴⁹ *birgiadhe* for *böryade*,⁵⁰ *gönom* for *genom*,⁵¹ *thöm* for *them*,⁵² *apostöl* for *apostel*,⁵³ *möghet* for *mæget*,⁵⁴ *Jöns* for *Jens*,⁵⁵ *senner* for *sönder*,⁵⁶ *löse* for *læse*,⁵⁷ *löfde* for *levede*,⁵⁸ *svönskr* for *svensker*.⁵⁹

The only explanation for these dual spellings is that the uncritical writers of the Middle Ages were not certain whether the words in question should be spelled with an *e* or an *ö*. Just so also with the runic scribe of Kensington. His training in spelling was deficient and so he substituted an *e* for an *ö*, as did many a more practised writer of his day. Such a spelling as *þep* for *död* would, however, be incomprehensible in a writer of the present day having the philological learning necessary to construct a runic inscription like this. This word is therefore a strong internal proof of the fourteenth century authorship of the inscription.

Illy. Some opponents of the Kensington inscription have urged that the phrase *frælse af illy* is an anglicism. They assume that the rune master inadvertently "repeated the English phrase 'Save of ill.'" It is needless to emphasize that no matter how "anglicized" a person might be, he would never be guilty of such a phrase inasmuch as it does not exist in the English language.

⁴⁸ *Svensk Dipl. n. s.* (1402).

⁴⁹ *Handlingar rörande Skandinaviens Historia*, p. XVII.

⁵⁰ *Erikskrönikon*, Klemming's Ed., lines 3041 and 3053.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, lines 1103 and 2363.

⁵² *Ibid.*, lines 904 and 925; also frequent elsewhere.

⁵³ Letter of Queen Margaret, 1393, last line.

⁵⁴ *Lucidarius*, XIV century, printed in Brandt's *Læsebog*, p. 76, line 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85, line 13; p. 77, line 17; p. 68, lines 22 and 23.

⁵⁶ *Upsala Kröni*. Printed in Brandt's *Læsebog*, p. 73, line 10.

⁵⁷ *Gudelig Visdoms-Bog* by H. Suso, MS. ca. 1400, printed in Brandt's *Læsebog*, p. 166, line 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169, line 29.

⁵⁹ *Kong Christoffers Landslag*, Schlyter's Ed., p. XVII. Rydquist has also discussed the very frequent substitution in Old Swedish of *e* and *æ* for *ö* in *Svenska Språkets Lagar*, IV, pp. 98-101. Among a multitude of illustrations, he cites *kemr* for *kömr*, *ex* for *öx*, *edha* for *ödha*, *red* for *röd*, *mæþarni* for *möþarni*, etc. As Rydquist says: "The sounds of *e*, *æ* and *ö* are not far distant from each other."

A good illustration of the entire propriety of this word *illy* and the phrase in which it occurs is found in an old folk-lore poem harking back to the Black Plague (A.D. 1349), but which came to light several years after the stone was found. I give the first stanza below and call especial attention to the last two lines, which, with some variations, serve as a refrain throughout the ballad.

Svartedauen for laand aa straand
 aa sopa so mangei tilje;
 De vi eg no far sanno tru,
 De va kje me Herrens vilji.⁶⁰
 Hjælpe oss Gud aa Maria Möy,
 Aa frelse oss alle av *illi*.

The Black Plague sped over land and sea
 And swept so many a board [floor];
 That will I now most surely believe,
 It was not with the Lord's will.
 Help us God and Virgin Mary,
 And save us all from evil.

Here, as will be noted, we have not only the phonetic equivalent of our *illy*, but also the same prayer addressed to the Virgin Mary as on the stone, plus the redundant *oss alle*. The ballad also, like the prayer in the inscription, uses the ancient preposition *af*, which in this meaning has long since been superseded by *fra*.

There is an intimate psychological fitness to this prayer which has escaped the attention of the critics. Writing, as the runemaster did, at a time of tragic stress and nervous apprehension of coming evils, he did not compose a new prayer, but unconsciously called to mind a fragment of the most familiar of all prayers—the Lord's Prayer. So also did the writer of the

⁶⁰ This folksong was communicated by Mr. Tortvei, Moorhead, Minn., to Mr. Torkel Oftelie, a folklorist of Fergus Falls, Minn., by whom it was printed in *Telesoga*, No. I, 1909. Mr. Tortvei was an octogenarian pioneer, now dead, who, though illiterate, remembered hundreds of old ballads which he had heard in his childhood. Mr. Oftelie sent this ballad—*Førnesbronnen*—to the eminent folklorist Rikard Berge of Telemarken, Norway, who said he had not met with it in his researches.

folk-lore poem. The Swedish version of 1300 of the Lord's Prayer also contains the phrase *frælse os af illu*.⁶¹

Lest someone should object to the final vowel *y* instead of *i*, let it be said that these two vowels are very frequently interchanged. Schlyter says that *Vestgöotalagen*, MS. of 1285, frequently spells the same word with both *i* and *y*.⁶² The experienced author of *Erikskrönikon* (Klemming's edition) is similarly careless. He writes (l. 1069), "Hans *pyna* worde ey long" and (l. 3949) "There *pina* war ill;" (l. 1187) "For *sina* siel ok synne husfruwa;" (l. 3041) "Ok fogle *birgiadhe* thera sangh" and (l. 3053) "Ok *böryade* tha en annen lek." The author of *Sialinna Tröst* (MS. of 1430) very frequently uses *y* for *i* in terminal syllables⁶³ (as, for instance, *gladhy* for *gladhi* thirty times, and *mykyn* for *mykin* forty-four times) See further, Noreen's *Altschwedische Grammatik*, §§108 and 531 where numerous other illustrations are cited.

I believe that my illustrations in this discussion have amply proved that there is not the slightest reason for supposing that these words, *from*, *mans*, *of* (*west*), *beþ* and *illy*, are English. Yet on such flimsy and spurious suppositions the inscription has been condemned by many. Far from being English words, they exhibit in a most pertinent manner the archaisms and errors characteristic of the awkward literary usage of the fourteenth century. It is high time that this remarkable inscription be given the serious and respectful consideration it deserves.

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⁶¹ *The Lord's Prayer in the Principal Languages of the World*, compiled by G. F. Bergholtz. The Lord's Prayer in Icelandic (*Mat.* VI, 13) translation of 1540 (see Vigfússon's *Icelandic Reader*, p. 274) has also the same phrase *frælsa þu oss af illu*.

⁶² Collin and Schlyter's Ed., p. VI.

⁶³ See N. Beckman's "Y-typen i Sialinna Tröst," *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi*, 1892, pp. 167-175. Mr. Beckman attempts to show that the *y* in terminal syllables represents a long *i* while *i* in the same position represents a short *i*, but with doubtful success. In any event his treatment shows that *y* in *illy* is perfectly legitimate in the literary usage of the times.